

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Silver medallist Hungarian national team with President Katalin Novák, men's tournament of the European Water Polo Championship in Split

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plenary session of European Parliament

War in Ukraine

TOP STORY

HUNGARY WON'T BACK EU GAS PRICE CAP

Hungary will in "no way" support a proposal to introduce a cap on the price of gas in Europe, according to Péter Szijjártó.

The foreign minister called such a measure "sanctions in disguise" leading to further increases in energy prices and serious challenges in terms of supply security. Szijjártó called the EU proposal "absurd", saying it was aimed at "suppressing Russian gas imports". Szijjártó insisted that a member of the European Commission had admitted that the proposed measure would be a political move to cut Russian state revenues and would not result in reduced gas prices. He also said the proposal was "disguised as a price cap" because "as a commercial measure it could be adopted with a two-thirds majority, whereas sanctions need unanimous support". Hungary would face serious risks to the security of its energy supplies should Russian gas be banned from the European market, Szijjártó said. "Ensuring gas supplies for a country is not a political or ideological ... but a physical issue," he said.

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SZIJJÁRTÓ: SANCTIONS HAVE FAILED

“How long does Brussels want to continue its sanctions policy, which runs totally contrary to Europe’s interests?” Péter Szijjártó, the foreign minister asked after a meeting of EU counterparts, adding that sanctions had “failed”, while the war was escalating and energy prices were at a record high. In addition, energy supplies are more and more problematic, he said. Introducing a price cap would be a political decision “but we know no political reason to give up the security of Hungary’s energy supplies”, he said. No political reason could make the government “put Hungarians in a humiliating position in which they could not heat, cook or have hot water”, he said, adding however that no decision had been made in Friday’s debate. The European Commission will submit a written proposal on the subject in the next few weeks.

Concerning current supplies, the minister said Hungary’s gas storage facilities contained 38% of the country’s annual consumption, as against 22% in the EU. He said Hungary’s was the third highest rate in Europe, and noted that the EU’s directive was 35%. Deliveries of gas purchased on top of contracted volumes are continuous, Szijjártó said, adding that 60% of all deliveries were received from the south.

FIN MIN: SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA ‘INEFFECTIVE’

Sanctions against Russia are not working, Finance minister Mihály Varga said on Saturday after attending a meeting of EU finance ministers in Prague. The European Union’s sanctions policy has not come up to expectations, Varga told MTI, noting that Europe was now paying an exorbitant price for Russian energy. “Brutal inflation and energy shortages linked to sanctions are bringing Europe to its knees,” he said. Whereas Hungary’s economy has performed well, with annual growth in the second quarter of 6.5% -- among the highest growth rates in the EU -- record high energy prices and inflation and drought-related damage to crops are likely to dampen growth in the third and fourth quarters, though growth may still reach around 4% in 2022, he added.

Varga said Hungary maintained its opposition to harmonised decision-making on taxation, and would not abandon its tax sovereignty.

Meanwhile, the minister said Hungary backs an emergency financial aid package of 9 billion euros for Ukraine. He noted that Hungary has already provided more than 28 billion forints (EUR 69m) in aid to Ukraine, and more than 900,000 refugees have crossed into the country. Also, member states that border Ukraine are taking on financial burdens of the war that other member states do not have to, Varga added.

DÖMÖTÖR: EU SANCTIONS HARMING EUROPE

The European Union’s sanctions against Russia are harming Europe itself, Csaba Dömötör, a cabinet parliamentary state secretary, told public broadcaster Kossuth Rádió on Sunday. “The sanctions are mighty but they don’t hit where they should,” he said, adding that they “are placing increasingly unbearable burdens on Europe’s economy”. He insisted that the largest price hikes had not been triggered by the outbreak of the war, but by “the flaunting and adoption of the sanctions”.

“There’s nobody in Europe left unaffected by an ill-advised sanctions policy, from high public utility bills through transport to agriculture,” he said. Dömötör called the sanctions “runaway means of economic self-destruction” and called for a change. While Europe’s economy is significantly slowing and unemployment is on the increase, and the euro is weakening against the dollar, Russia’s economic recession will not be as great as expected, while it has posted the second largest current account surplus in the world, the state secretary said. Russia had even been able to increase its energy revenues while selling less gas to Europe, he said, adding that energy company Gazprom had accrued 85% more revenues than before sanctions were imposed. Europe depends on Russian gas, he said. “But instead of changing direction, the EU is planning a price cap on Russian gas,

which would be a sanction disguised as a trade regulation ... presenting a serious risk that Russia would stop gas deliveries," he said.

PM'S POLITICAL DIRECTOR: TRANSPARENCY IN USE OF EU MONIES SHARED INTEREST

Transparency in the use of European Union monies is a shared interest of Hungary and the EU, the prime minister's political director said ahead of an annual civic event held in Kötcse, in western Hungary. Balázs Orbán told journalists in response to a question concerning plans to set up a Hungarian anti-corruption board that Brussels and the Hungarian government were continually monitoring the use of EU funds. There is no dispute with Brussels in this area and the government welcomes all proposals, he added.

In response to a question concerning whether Hungary was showing due respect to teachers, he said that as much as the country could afford, efforts were being made to give them the appreciation they deserve "also in financial terms". "We are continually working on enabling more and more social groups doing important work to get increasingly high wages. Hikes have been introduced in public education and higher education," he said, adding that it was a labour rights issue whether teachers practicing civil disobedience should be fired. "We have no such intention but if it remains the only option allowed by law, then it will be unavoidable."

Fidesz MEP Tamás Deutsch told the press at the same event that Hungary and the European Commission were involved in talks advancing towards consensus regarding the utilisation of resources from the recovery fund. The EC representatives attending the talks had not raised the issue of Hungary refusing to join the European public prosecutor's office. "We never had anything to hide concerning the use of EU monies," he said, adding that the proportion of single bid public procurements in Hungary was below the EU average.

FINMIN: HUNGARY BACKS EU FINANCIAL AID FOR UKRAINE

Hungary, like other European Union member states, is prepared to support with guarantees the disbursement of EU aid to Ukraine, Finance Minister Mihály Varga said in Prague on Friday. Hungary has so far provided over 28 billion forints (EUR 70.5m) worth of aid to Ukraine and has taken in more than 900,000 refugees from its north-eastern neighbour, the finance ministry cited Varga as saying after an informal meeting with his EU counterparts. The Hungarian government has been calling for an immediate ceasefire and peace talks since the beginning of the conflict, Varga said, noting that Hungary still does not allow the transit of weapons deliveries through its territory. At the same time, he added, Hungary supports providing financial aid to Ukraine with a view to

mitigating the damage caused by the war and sharing of the burdens fairly and squarely. Hungary and Ukraine's other neighbouring EU member states are forced to bear financial burdens of the effects of the war that other member states do not, Varga said, adding that this, too, should be taken into consideration when providing joint aid. The EU and its financial institutions disbursed close to 5 billion euros in loans to Ukraine between 2014 and 2021, the ministry said. Following the start of the war, EU leaders agreed in May to provide another 9 billion euros in aid to the country, 1 billion of which Ukraine received last month. EU finance ministers on Friday agreed on another 5 billion euro aid package for Ukraine, which will be followed by a further 3 billion euros before the end of the year, the ministry said.

NOVI SAD UNIVERSITY'S HUNGARIAN-LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING FACULTY BUILDING INAUGURATED

Serbia and Hungary's relations are based on understanding and care, President Katalin Novák said at the inauguration of the building of the University of Novi Sad's Hungarian-language teacher training faculty in Subotica (Szabadka), in northern Serbia. In her speech at the inauguration, Novák emphasised that the ethnic Hungarian community of Serbia's Vojvodina region and the Serbian leadership were working

hard to keep the friendship between the two countries “as close as it is”. The president said children in Vojvodina needed to be given not just knowledge, but also a love of their mother tongue, an identity, faith and patriotism. Novák also touched on the migration pressure faced by Serbia and the rest of Europe, saying that Prime Minister Ana Brnabic had assured her that Serbia “understands this problem” and was working on a solution that would help the local Hungarian community. She reiterated Hungary’s support for Serbia’s accession to the European Union, saying that “we need Serbia and it is in our interest that the ethnic Hungarian community in Vojvodina be given European Union citizenship as soon as possible”.

István Pásztor, head of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ), called Novák’s visit to Belgrade “a new important milestone” in the two countries’ relationship which also benefited Vojvodina Hungarians. He said the teacher training faculty building would not have become a reality without the Hungarian government’s contribution of over 1 billion forints (EUR 2.5m) to the project.

**KÖVÉR EXPRESSES
CONDOLENCES TO
UK PARLT SPEAKERS
OVER DEATH OF QUEEN
ELIZABETH II**

Speaker of Parliament László Kövér has expressed his condolences to the speakers of the United Kingdom’s

Houses of Commons and Lords over the death of Queen Elizabeth II. “It was with deep sadness that I learned of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II,” Kövér wrote in his messages to House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle and House of Lords Speaker Lord McFall of Alcluith.

The Queen’s entire life, “which she dedicated to the service of her people, is an example to us all”, Kövér said, highlighting the Queen’s commitment “to the importance of tradition and enduring values in the modern world”. “Let me avail myself of this opportunity to express the deep condolences of the Hungarian National Assembly and the Hungarian people to the Royal Family and the people of the United Kingdom,” Kövér said.

**PÁRBESZÉD CALLS ON
GOVT TO STOP ‘PRIORITY
INVESTMENTS’**

The opposition Párbeszéd party is submitting a bill to MPs on stopping any further government priority investments and repealing the relevant law, arguing that such investments often harm the environment, as well as ignoring local government building regulations and monument protection rules. Since 2010, almost 3,000 priority investments nationwide have received permits, Párbeszéd’s co-leader, Rebeka Szabó, told a press briefing on Sunday. She said the investments which failed to take the interests of locals into consideration were a boon to people in ruling Fidesz circles. Párbeszéd

complained of “monstrous concrete” developments such as the one to revamp Bosnyák Square in Budapest against which a signature drive has been organised.

**OFFICIAL: GOVT ASKS
CIVIL GUARDS TO
CONTINUE BORDER
PROTECTION**

The government has appealed to civil guards to continue protecting the border until year-end, with the promise of further reimbursement, a government official said on Sunday. In February, the government asked civil guards help protect the southern border, for which they have received payment, Zsolt Nyitrai, the prime ministerial commissioner in charge of social policy, said in a video uploaded to Facebook. Out of 65,000 civil guards who normally maintain public safety in localities voluntarily, more than 11,000 have contributed to border protection in the past five months, and they are being asked to carry on doing so until the end of the year against continued payment for their services.

“We thank civil guards for helping in the serious and responsible task of policing the border, and soon they will be joined by special border patrollers,” Nyitrai said.

András Túrós, president of the National Civil Guard Association, noted that the civil guard is the only non-governmental organisation participating in border protection. In the past few months, 11,000 civil



guards have completed 110,000 hours of service, helping to capture more than 10,000 border violators, he said, adding that they reported 20 cases of human trafficking to the authorities. He said the "enhanced border protection service" will carry on performing their duties from Sept. 12 following the government's request and with the unanimous agreement of civil guard leaders.

MORE THAN 16,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON SATURDAY

Fully 6,709 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Saturday, while another 9,859 from Ukraine crossed from Romania, the national police headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 254 people, ORFK told MTI on Sunday. Holders of such permits must contact

a local immigration office near their place of residence within thirty days to apply for permanent documents, it added. Fully six people, two children among them, arrived in Budapest by train, ORFK said.

HUNGARY TOURISM SPENDING SURPLUS CLIMBS TO HUF 311BN IN Q2

Hungary's tourism spending surplus rose by an annual 73% to 311 billion forints in the second quarter, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. Spending by foreign tourists jumped 111% to 556 billion, albeit from a low pandemic base. Day-trippers accounted for 132 billion forints of that spending. Spending by Hungarians on holiday abroad grew by 193% to 245 billion forints. Hungarians' spending rose because of an increase in the number of trips, longer stays, inflation and the weaker forint, KSH

said. Hungarians spent the most, some 48 billion, in Austria, followed by 31 billion spent in Germany and 18 billion in Italy.

GROSAN AWARDED AT VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

Hungarian film director Cristina Grosan received an independent director's prize given to female directors under 40 at the Venice Film Festival for her film Hétköznapi Kudarok (Everyday Failures) screened at the festival's Giornate degli Autori programme, on Sunday. Hetkoznapi kudarok, a Czech-Hungarian-Italian co-production supported by the Hungarian National Film Institute, had been invited to the programme together with nine other films. According to the festival's website, Grosan received the Autrici Under 40 prize together with Sweden's Isabella Carbonell. This is the first time the prize has been awarded to a Hungarian filmmaker.